(d) the extent to which it is correct that over 100 passengers were travelling in the sleeper coach meant to accommopleased to state:

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Yes, Sir. There was an accident involving fire on a second class sleeper coach of 8001 Dn. Bombay-Howrah Mail between Lotapahar and Chakradharpur stations of Rourkela-Chakradharpur section of Chakradharpur division of South Eastern Railway on 26-10-94. 29 dead bodies were taken out from the fire affected coach. 4 passengers sustained grievous injuries and 13 others suffered simple injuries in the accident.

(b) Statutory inquiry into the accident is being conducted by the Commissioner of Railway Safety, South Eastern Circle, whose Final Report is awaited.

(c) The following steps have been taken to prevent similar accidents:—

(i) Educating the travelling public through public address system, newspapers, TV, radio and cinema slides, specially in regional languages, regarding dangers of carrying inflammable and explosive material on passenger trains.

(ii) Apprehending passengers, hawkers and vendors carrying inflammable materials on the trains.

(iii) Proper maintenance of electrical devices in the passenger coaches is ensured.

(iv) A pilot scheme called 'Instant Action Group', consisting of various staff, has been launched mainly for preventing unauthorised passengers entering reserved coaches, carriage of suspicious and inflammable articles and to take prompt action on complaints and grievances of passengers.

(v) Intensive checks are carried out at maintenance depots to ensure smooth working of the alarm chain apparatus in passenger carrying trains.

(vi) Provision of fire fighting arrangements at nominated locations in railway premises and trains.

The cause and responsibility for the fire on 8001 Dn. is under investigation and will be concluded by the Commissioner of Railway Safety. Action against railway staff held responsible, if any, will be taken on receipt of the Final Inquiry Report.

(d) 83 passengers were travelling including RAC passengers.

Late running of North East Express

195. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that once famous North East Express to and from Guwahati and New Delhi has of late become one of the most neglected train in the Railway set-up.

(b) what is the cause for regular inordinate delay in running this train; and

(c) whether Government would take immediate steps to regularise the train?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) to (c). The punctuality of 5621/5622 North-East Express has been affected in the recent past due to various reasons particularly the following:

(i) speed restrictions for the entire Assam region for security reasons,

(ii) detention of trains at Gossaigaonhat station by the Government of Assam for medical check-up of the incoming passengers on account of outbreak of plague in different parts of the country,

(iii) non-interlocked working at Guwahati in connection with the conversion of Guwahati-Lumding section into Broad Gauge,

(iv) single line system prevailing on N[illegible] Frontier Railway,

(v) accidents, alarm-chain-pulling and equipment failures.

All efforts including intensive chasing and round the clock monitoring are being made to improve the punctuality of this train.

Frequency of Guwahati Rajdhani Express

196. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the weekly Guwahati Rajdhani Express is not at all sufficient for travelling public of the entire North-East region;

(b) whether Government are contemplating to increase its frequency at least to thrice a week in the near future; and

(c) what are the reasons for stopping Guwahati Rajdhani Express at Patna while two other Rajdhani Expresses have already stoppage at Patna?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) Some passengers remain on the waiting list of Guwahati Rajdhani Express.

(b) The proposal to increase the frequency of New Delhi-Guwahati Rajdhani Express during 1995-96 is being examined and action as found feasible and justified will be taken.

(c) For the convenience of the passengers travelling between Patna and N.E States.

Grant of HRA & CCA to railway employees

197. SHRI A. NALLASIVAN : Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Board had issued order in their memo. No. E (P&A)II/95/MEA/CCA/5 dated 31st May, 1994 restoring grant of HRA and CCA as of B-I Class City as special case for railway employees working in Kamptee, Nagpur;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the General Manager, Khidirpore, Calcutta has not forwarded the Railway Board Memo, DRM, SER, Nagpur and the Kamptee Railway employees has not received the benefit of railway board orders; and

(c) the reasons for delay in forwarding the Railway Board Memo to DRM, SER, Nagpur by GM, SER, Khidirpore, Calcutta and action taken to implement the orders?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) Yes, Sir. Railway Board vide letter No. E(P&A)II/94/HRA/CCA/5 dated 31st May, 1994 have allowed, as a special case, that in respect of those railway employees who are posted in that part of Kamptee (UA) which was earlier part of Nagpur (UA), HRA/CCA will continue to be applicable at the same rates (i.e. 'B-I' class rates).

(b) and (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Introduction of non-stop rain between Howrah and Bombay

198. SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: Will the Miniser of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any steps are being taken to introduce non-stop trains between Howrah and Bombay, Howrah and New Delhi and Bombay and New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay to introduce such trains?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) to (c). No, Sir. Introduction of non-stop trains is operationally not feasible as some stoppage (s) will have to be provided for operational reasons like change of crew, watering, etc.